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Thomas Phillips to Aubrey Hall, 20 April 1896

c/- Mrs Bolton
Burnley House
Stockwell
London SW
England
April 20, 1896

My dear Aubrey

Before I refer to the sad subject of your letter I must explain how it is that you have not heard from me before. A position in a remote part of England, Cornwall, had been obtained for me before I came home, and I felt in honour bound to accept it. But its duties were of a very peculiar character and I was compelled for a time to drop all correspondence and to abandon all hopes of seeing my friends in England until I could get away. This I have just done and after a short rest my next work will probably be near London.

And now one of the first things I do is to write to you, and assure you that however strange my silence may seem, it has not arisen from any want of interest in the North West, much less from any forgetfulness of the innumerable kindnesses I received there, less still of those from your own family, the memory of which will remain with me when much else may be forgotten. And your letter so thoughtfully written, so appreciative of the one who was no more, so tender, yet strong and true, affected me very much as did the account in the papers you kindly sent. I cannot tell you how much I valued that letter and not so much for what it expressed as for what it implied. I have read it many times and it brings back to me a thousand memories of Cossack and of your good mother & of the silent influence she had for good in that place and upon all around her. It recalls all that I knew of your father, all that I admired honored and revered in him, even revered it is not too strong a word for there was much in him which under more favourable conditions would have ranked him amongst men of the noblest character. He was no ordinary man whether in the powerful grasp of his mind and the solidity of his acquirements or in his natural strength and courage and the high standard he set before him of doing unto others as he would have them do to him. All this lay

upon the surface, there was much more that would be only known to yourselves. But it was easy to recognise how these high qualities could never attain their full development or be put to the best use where he was, how much there was on the other hand to draw him down from his rightful place in the surroundings wherein his lot was of necessity cast. It makes me very sad as I think of it now, and it has often done so in the past. There seemed no remedy. But he was under the good hand of the Great Father who knows all the force of temptation, the weaknesses unsuspected by ourselves, our desires for good no less than our frequent shortcomings.

I have thought often of the terrible shock it must have been to your good mother and to you all. It seems even now hard to realise — as he was no ordinary man, so his death was no ordinary one. It must have been quite painless, instantaneous probably and in the element with which he was so familiar.

It was a great pleasure to me to know how you were getting on, and it always will be to hear that you are doing well. Give my kindest remembrances to Joy and to Ernest and also remember me kindly to any who still think of me. Above all give my kindest regards to your mother. May she have the unseen comfort which is from above, and that all which is to be found here in the love and esteem of those who are still left to us and with the highest wishes for your welfare and prosperity

I remain

yours very sincerely

Thos Phillips

P S Do not forget if ever you have an opportunity to give my kindest regards to Mr Pearce and to any number of his family & to Mr Roe &c. I do not know what has become of Mr F Stevenson but I yet hope he will do well though he suffered so terribly in the losses of those fearful seasons of drought & flood.

I have to thank you for the remembrance card which I have placed among my treasures. The above address will probably find me for a long time to come.